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2020

### Lesson 04: Death and Mourning in the Prehistoric and Ancient World

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“Death and Mourning in the Prehistoric and Ancient World” is part of the

## **ART APPRECIATION**

Open Educational Resource

by Marie Porterfield Barry  
East Tennessee State University, 2020

### **Introduction**

This course explores the world’s visual arts, focusing on the development of visual awareness, assessment, and appreciation by examining a variety of styles from various periods and cultures while emphasizing the development of a common visual language. The materials are meant to foster a broader understanding of the role of visual art in human culture and experience from the prehistoric through the contemporary.

This is an Open Educational Resource (OER), an openly licensed educational material designed to replace a traditional textbook.

### **Course Materials**

#### **Presentations**

The course materials consist of 24 presentations examining art across the globe from prehistory through the contemporary art world. These introduce key vocabulary, explore the way that culture and art are linked, describe the varying methods and techniques of the featured artists, and encourage classroom discourse.

#### **Reading Lists**

Each of the 24 presentations has an accompanying reading list which provides links to articles, videos, and other resources. The reading list is meant to reinforce and clarify information covered in each of the presentations.

#### **Sample Assignments**

A list of sample assignments is also included. Ranging from brief essays to simple art projects, these are designed to be completed in a sketchbook to more deeply explore course concepts. Intended to encourage learners to think like artists, art critics, and art historians, assignments emphasize practices of creative thinking and artistic method, while reinforcing concepts addressed in classroom lectures and required readings.

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Some of the images presented in this OER are marked with a Creative Commons license and include a tag for Educational Fair Use, especially works of art that have been photographed while installed in museums. The photographs of these works of art are licensed by the photographer but the two-dimensional works of art are protected under copyright. The images are therefore meant only for the purpose of education and contemplation and are included in a low resolution.

## Adopting, Adapting, or Expanding the Resource

The goal for this OER is to build an educational resource that is flexible enough to address concepts relevant to the contemporary discourse and scholarship in the visual arts. For those interested in utilizing these course materials, I am providing below some additional information that may be useful in expanding, adapting, or reinterpreting the materials. Editable versions are available in Microsoft PowerPoint and Word at <https://dc.etsu.edu/art-appreciation-oer/>

The font used to create the presentations and written documents for this OER is Calibri.

## Finding Additional Readings, Lessons, and Articles

**Smarthistory:** <https://smarthistory.org/>

Smarthistory is an extensive open educational resource which publishes outstanding essays and video lectures about art. The Creating + Conserving section of Smarthistory includes wonderful informational articles and videos about materials and processes: <https://smarthistory.org/tag/conservation/>

**MoMA Learning:** [https://www.moma.org/learn/moma\\_learning/](https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/)

MoMA Learning provides a wonderful selection of essays on works of modern art and also has assignment suggestions at the bottom of each section.

**KhanAcademy:** <https://www.khanacademy.org/>.

Khan Academy is an outstanding platform of open educational resources covering a variety of academic and scholarly topics.

**Trivium Art History:** <https://arthistoryproject.com/>

Trivium Art History is a free, online art history book with clean design and approachable descriptions of works of art, periods of art history, and fun artist biographies. The [Themes of Art](#) section is a nice tool to helping students explore works that match their interests. The [World of Art](#) section is a useful tool for an exploratory World Art sketchbook prompt. The [Timeline](#) section is useful, as it separates works of art into galleries based on period.

**Introduction to Art: Design, Context, and Meaning:** <https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/arts-textbooks/3/>

For a more traditional, textbook approach, there is an Introduction to Art open educational resource textbook available.

## Locating Images

If you are utilizing the course materials and would like to add new images that are public domain or licensed under Creative Commons, there are several useful tips provided below for finding images.

**The Met Museum:** <https://www.metmuseum.org/>

The Met has an option to search for Open Access images within the collection [here](#). Make sure that the “Open Access” box is checked. The image license is [CC0 1.0](#), and will be marked OA Public Domain at the lower left of the image.

**Google Images:** <https://www.google.com/imghp?hl=en&tab=wi&ogbl>

[Google Images](#) has an option under “Settings” > “Advanced Search” to search by “Usage Rights”.

Choosing “Free to use share or modify” will allow a search for images suitable for expanding our OER.

**Wikimedia Commons:** <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>

[Wikimedia Commons](#) is an outstanding resource for finding open source images, with a strong collection of works of art.

**Flickr:** <https://www.flickr.com>

[Flickr](#) allows users to specify image licenses on uploaded photographs. Click “Some rights reserved” at the lower right of the image to check the licensing. Some images will say “Public Domain” or will be licensed under a [Creative Commons](#) (CC) license, allowing for the use in an OER.

**Smarthistory Flickr:** <https://www.flickr.com/groups/smarthistory/pool/>

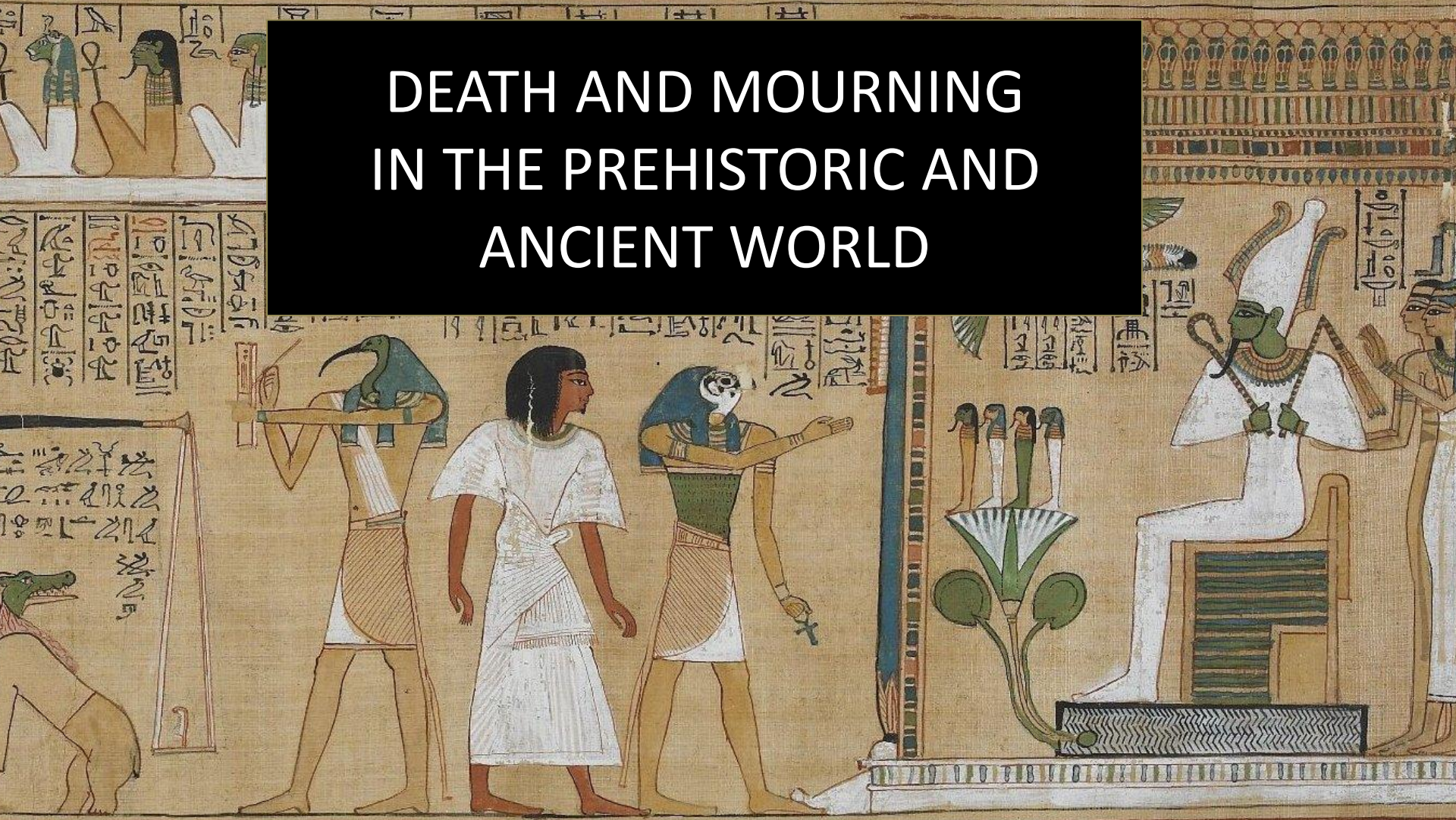
The [Smarthistory Flickr](#) is expansive with images licensed for educational purposes.

## Acknowledgements

This Art Appreciation OER was adapted from existing resources by Marie Porterfield Barry as part of East Tennessee State University’s Open Educational Resources (OERs) Initiatives, which are a collaboration of the Charles C. Sherrod Library and the Center for Teaching Excellence. Deepest gratitude for the support from Ashley Sergiadis of Sherrod Library and Phil Smith of the Center for Teaching Excellence during the building of this resource. Thanks as well to my students at East Tennessee State University whose feedback and participation during our Art Appreciation classes was immensely valuable in compiling and evaluating this OER.



# DEATH AND MOURNING IN THE PREHISTORIC AND ANCIENT WORLD



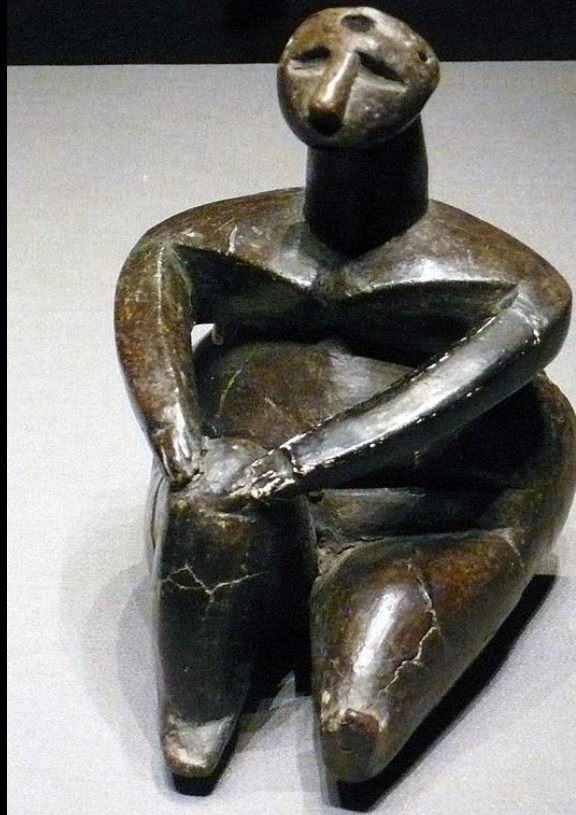




Evidence confirms that since prehistoric times, burial has been an important, often ceremonial, event for humankind.



Current theories suggest Stonehenge is a ceremonial Neolithic burial site.



*Man and Woman from Cernavodă*  
Neolithic, c. 3500 BCE, Clay.

Author: 三猫

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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Figural statues have been found in Neolithic graves, including these two figures of a man and a woman from a single grave in Cernavodă, Romania.

Although their exact meaning is unclear, they suggest care in the burial act.



In early Neolithic settlements such as *Çatalhöyük* settlement (dating back to 7400 BCE) in Anatolia (modern Turkey) the dead were buried beneath the floors in the homes.



*Neolithic burial in foundations of homes at Çatalhöyük*

Author: [Scott D. Haddow](#)

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*Model of Neolithic Settlement Çatalhöyük*

Author: [Wolfgang Sauber](#)

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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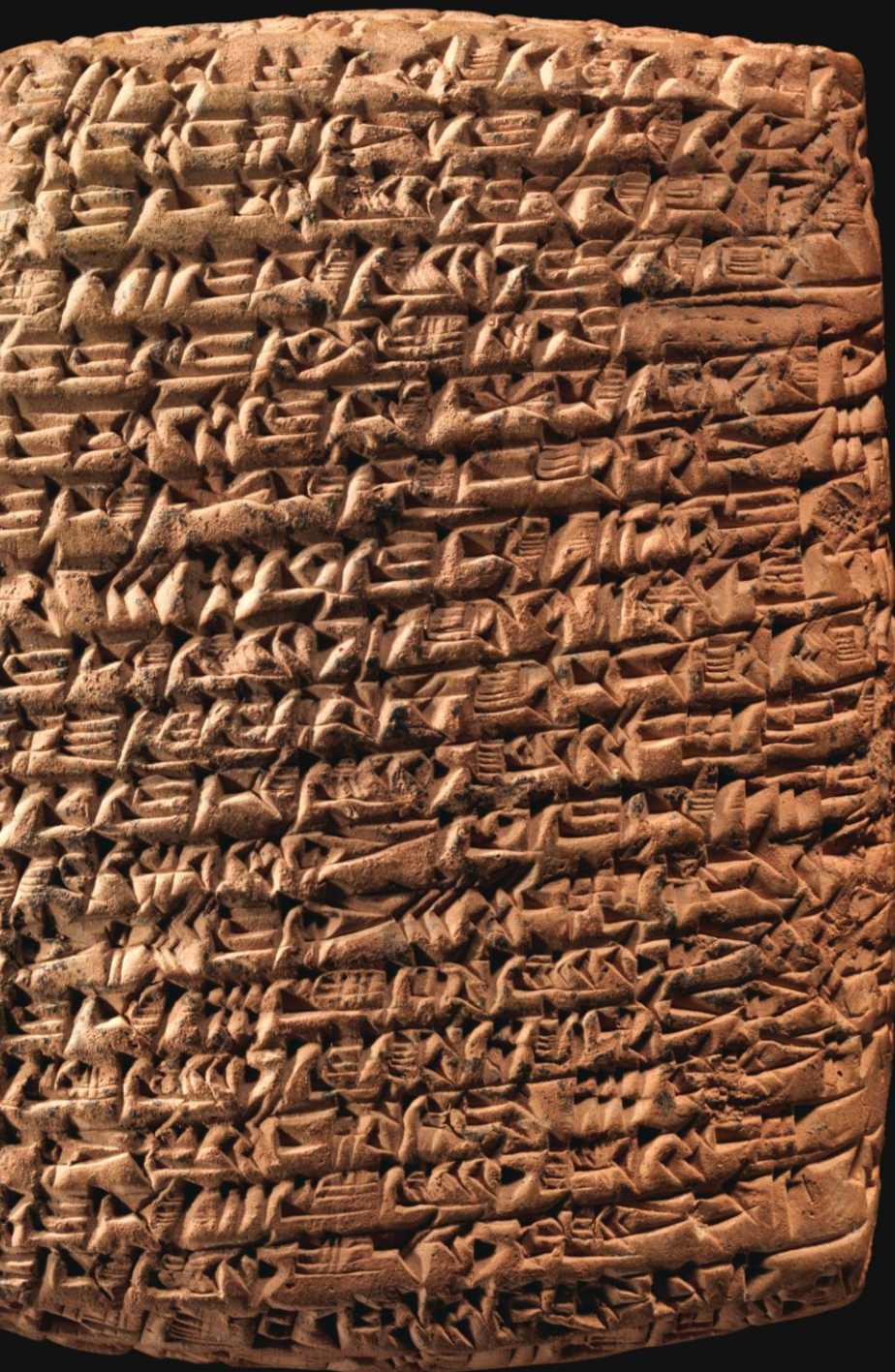


Sites such as the Neolithic Varna Necropolis (in Bulgaria) provide evidence of social hierarchy and the practice of honoring important persons in death through burial practices as certain individuals were buried with gold jewelry and precious objects.

*Burial at Varna Necropolis*  
c. 4,600 - 4,200 BCE

Author: [Yelkrokoyade](#)  
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One of the earliest systems of writing, *cuneiform*, was invented by the Sumerians of Ancient Mesopotamia around 3000 BCE.

*Cuneiform Tablet*  
c. 2000 BCE

Source: [MET Museum](#), *Cropped from original*  
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Originally used for accounting purposes, the writing system evolved from pictogram to cuneiform.

TABLE ILLUSTRATING THE SIMPLIFICATION  
OF CUNEIFORM SIGNS.

	STAR	HEAD OF A MAN	EAR OF WHEAT	MAN (with his crown)	CIRCLE, SUN	RAIN	HOUSE	DRINKING POT	REED	FISH
LINE CHARACTER.										
OLD BABYLONIAN.										
ASSYRIAN.										
NEW BABYLONIAN.										

Above: Illustration from "A Guide to the Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities" by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge and Leonard William King, showing the development of cuneiform. Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain

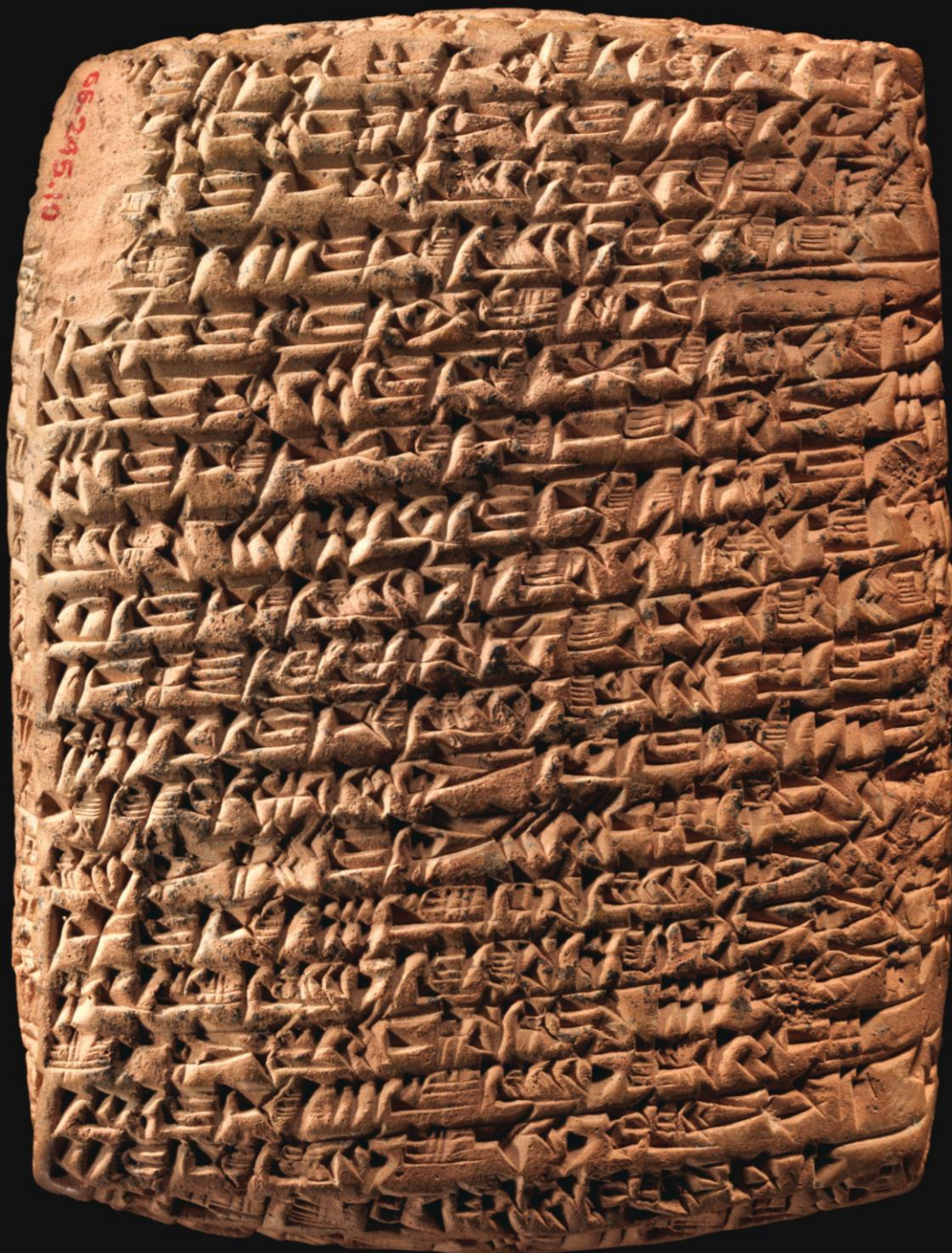
Left: Cuneiform Tablet Source: [MET Museum](#), Cropped from original, License: [CC0 1.0](#)



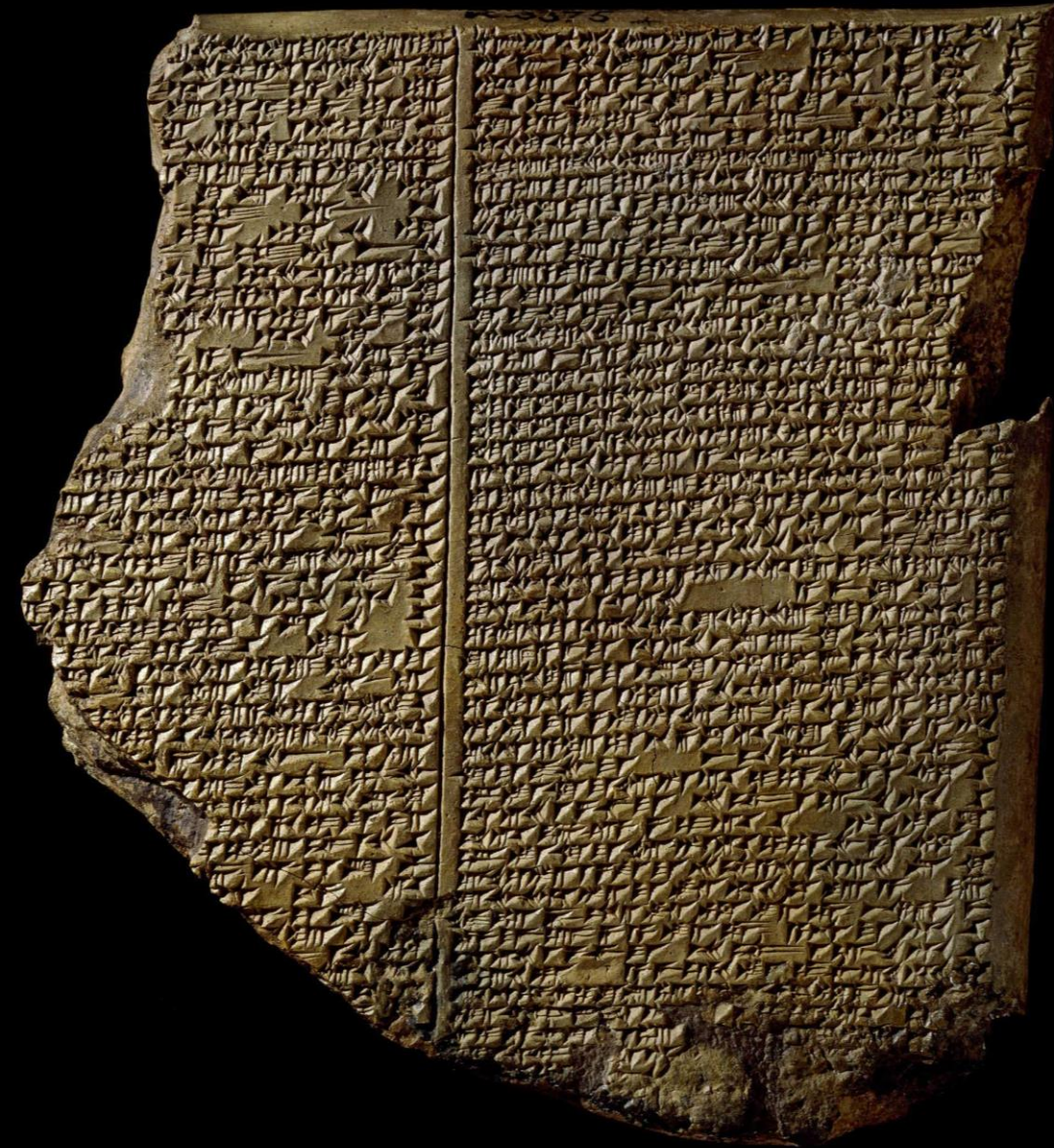
To write, a stylus with a triangular tip was pressed into a wet clay tablet.

*Cuneiform Tablet*  
c. 2000 BCE

Source: [MET Museum](#), *Cropped from original*  
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The first known literary epic, *Epic of Gilgamesh*, originates from the Sumerians of Ancient Mesopotamia and tells the story of a hero in mourning who sets out to find eternal life, and hence, to escape from death.

*The Flood Tablet / The Gilgamesh Tablet*

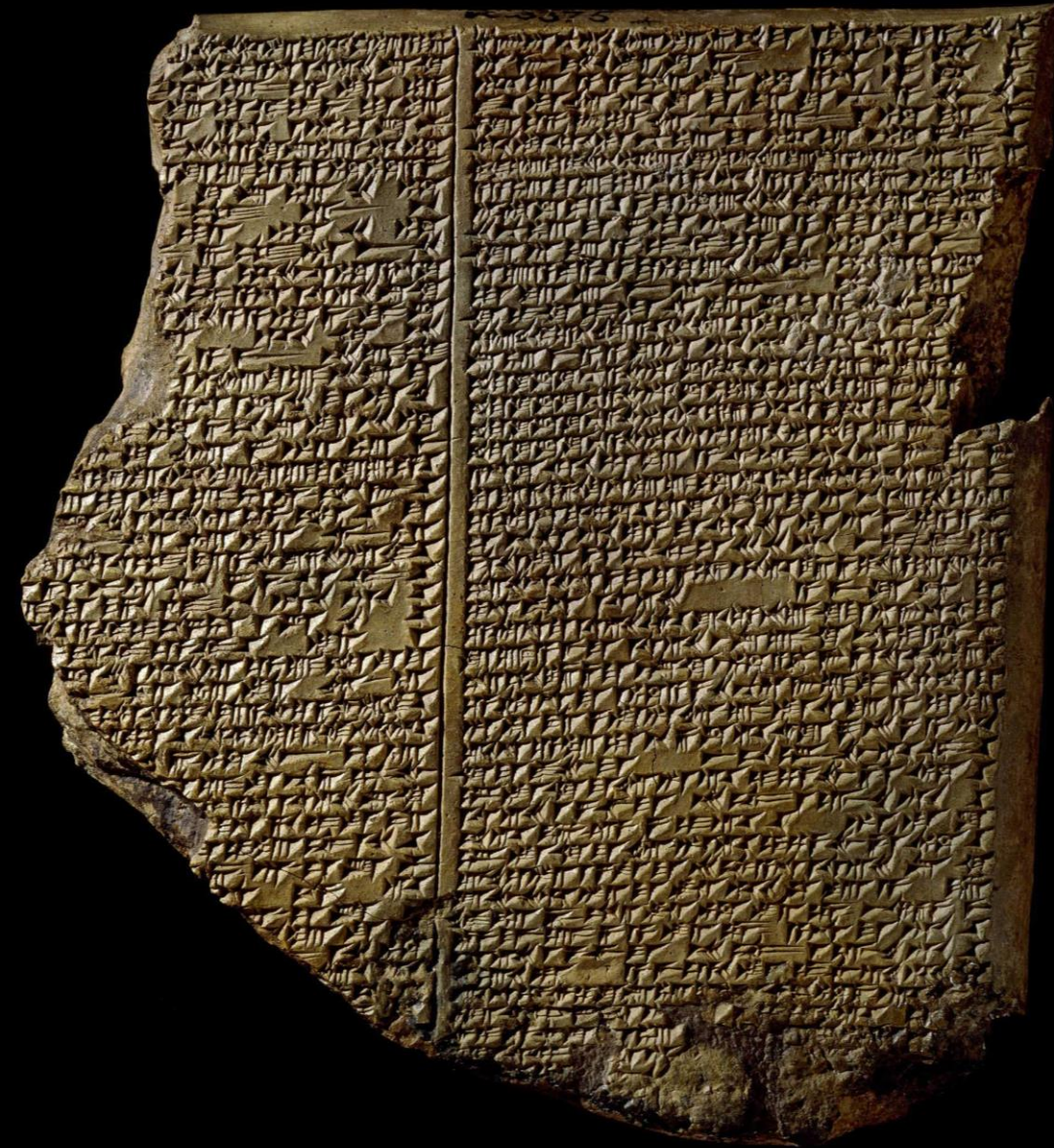
©Trustees of the British Museum

c. 700-600 BCE

Source: [The British Museum](#)

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*Epic of Gilgamesh*: After the death of his companion, the Sumerian King of Uruk, Gilgamesh, searches for eternal life.

He seeks a man and woman who were the sole survivors of a great flood to learn of how to achieve immortality.

Gilgamesh fails at achieving immortality. He eventually accepts his own mortality and turns back to his city Uruk.

*The Flood Tablet / The Gilgamesh Tablet*

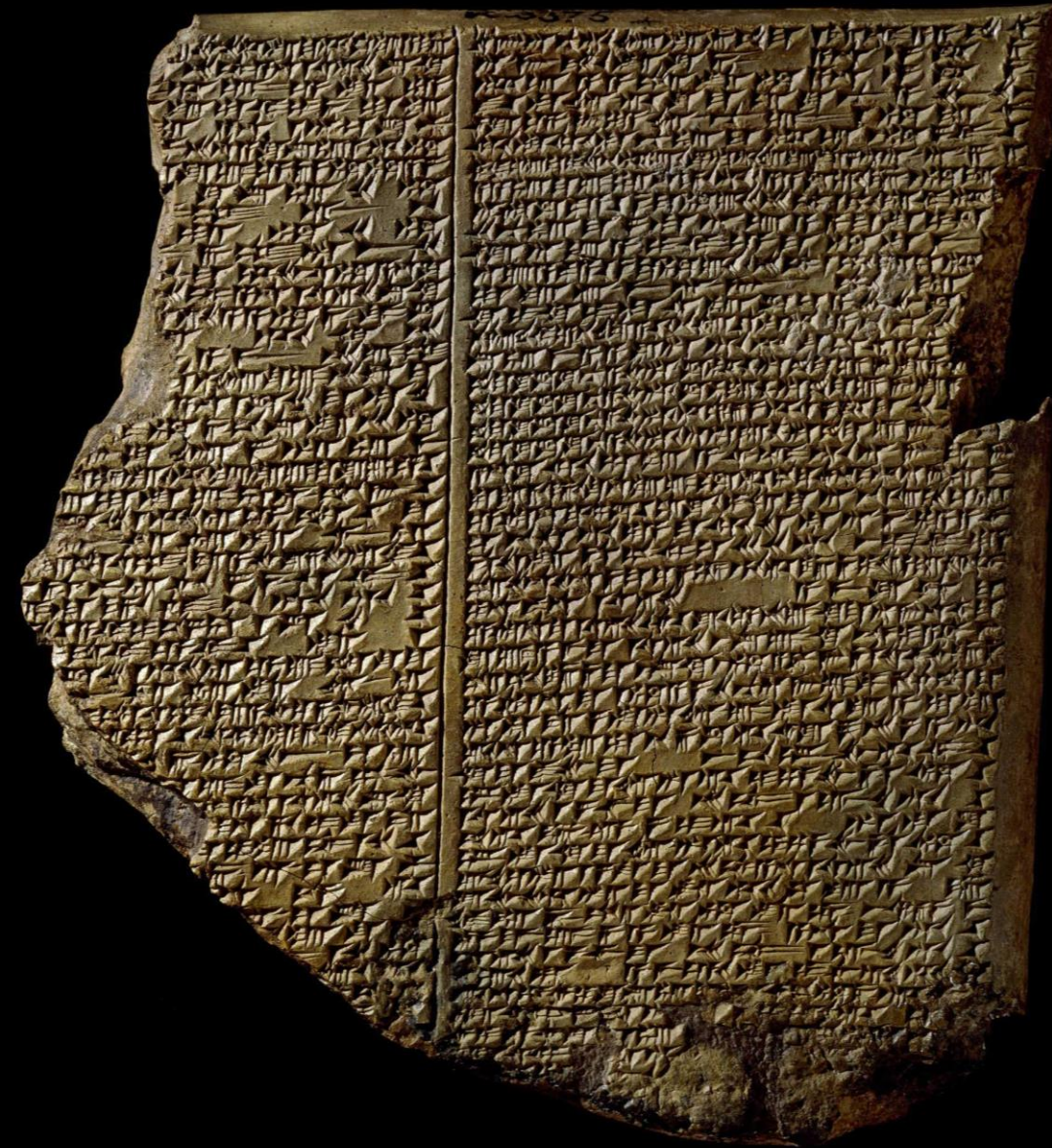
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c. 700-600 BCE

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In the earliest known literary epic in human history, we find death as a common theme. The hero of our story seeks to overcome death by finding immortality.

*The Flood Tablet / The Gilgamesh Tablet*

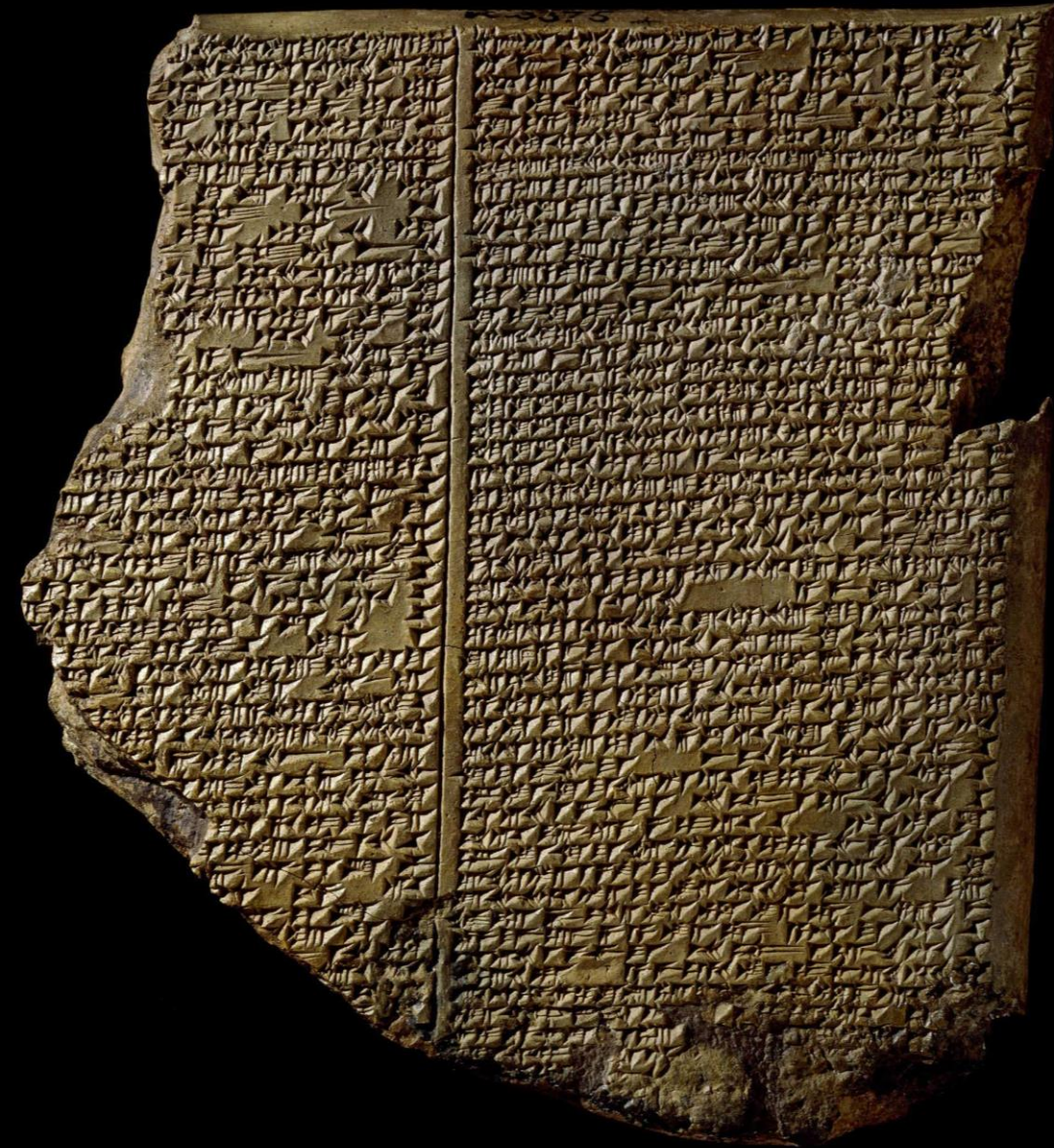
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c. 700-600 BCE

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At the end of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, our hero also praises the grandeur of his city of Uruk. The epic implies that the city itself, built up and protected by the great king Gilgamesh, is his legacy.

So art, literature, and architecture are those things which endure. Through the study of prehistoric and ancient times, we see that these works of art do indeed grant a sense of immortality to those whose lives on earth ended millennia ago.

*The Flood Tablet / The Gilgamesh Tablet*

©Trustees of the British Museum

c. 700-600 BCE

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*Gilgamesh's great city of Uruk becomes his legacy...*

The Sumerians built great cities around elevated temples, called Ziggurats, which served as a bridge between the earthly humans and heavenly gods.



*Ziggurat in Uruk*

From 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BCE

Located in modern Warka, Iraq

Author: David Stanley

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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The *Royal Tombs of Ur*, an important group of Sumerian tombs, provide clues into the way that Sumerians viewed death. The burial site, used between the years 2600-2000 BCE, includes hundreds of burial pits in each of which dozens of individuals are buried.

*Bull's Head Lyre*

From the *Royal Tombs of Ur*, ca. 2600 B.C.E

Author: [Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin FRCP\(Glasg\)](#)

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*Cylinder Seal of Queen Puabi with Impression on Clay.*

Lapis Lazuli, c.2600 BCE.

Author: [Nic McPhee](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

A cylinder seal, used to authenticate cuneiform tablets, bears the name Puabi and was found in one of the most lavish, and undisturbed, graves.

The rich burial, complete with gold-clad attendants, suggest that the central woman buried in the grave was important, perhaps either a queen or a priestess.



Queen Puabi was lavishly attired for burial in gold, carnelian, and lapis lazuli.



*Queen Puabi's burial jewelry, ca. 2600 BCE.*  
Author: [Penn Museum](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

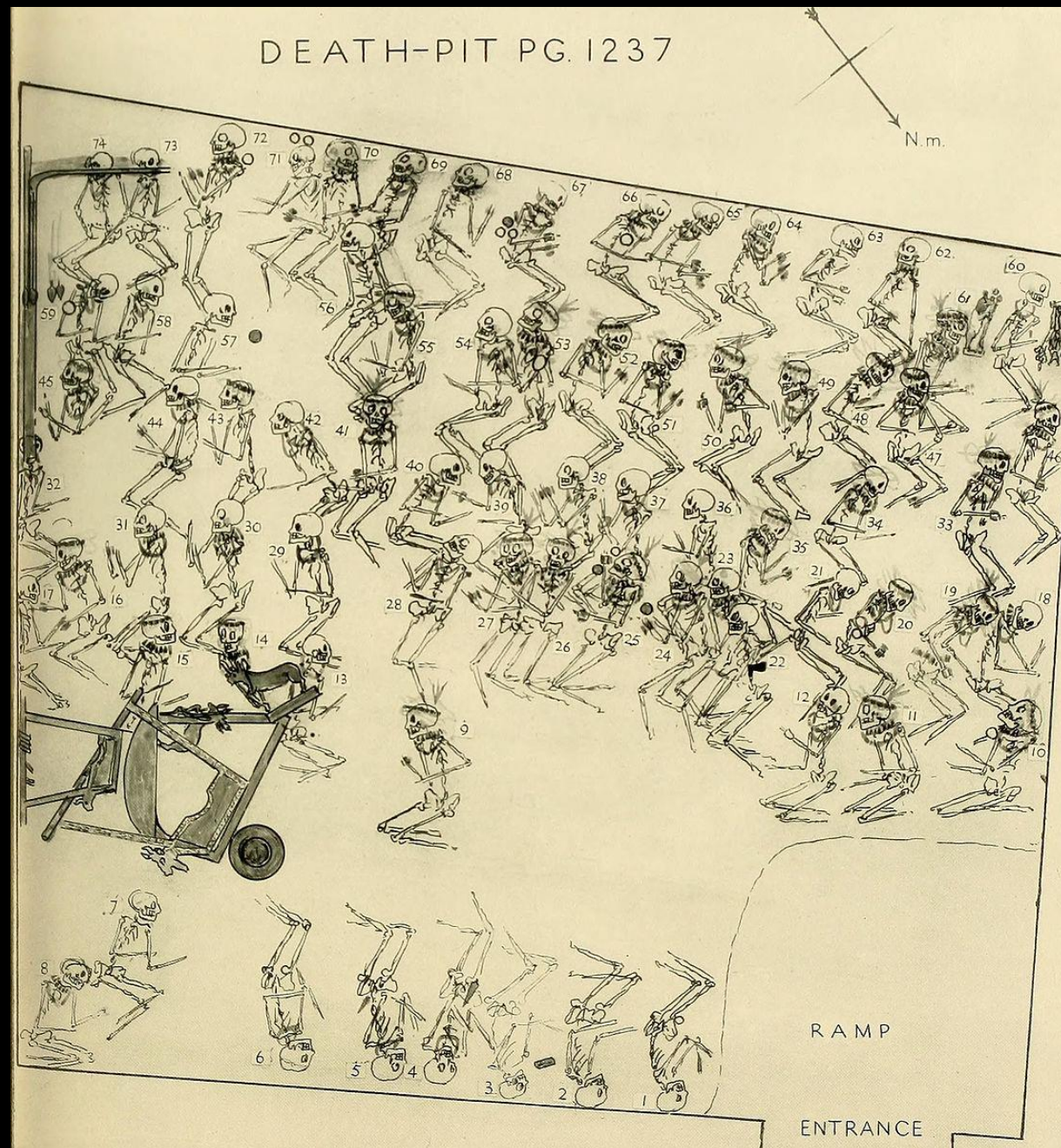


*Queen Puabi's burial adornments*  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: [Public Domain](#)



Piecing together evidence from the millennia-old burial site, archaeologists suspect that the funeral services for important members of society, likely royals or high priestesses, lasted for several days. At the end of the services, attendants were sacrificed (perhaps voluntarily) and buried alongside the royal whom they served.

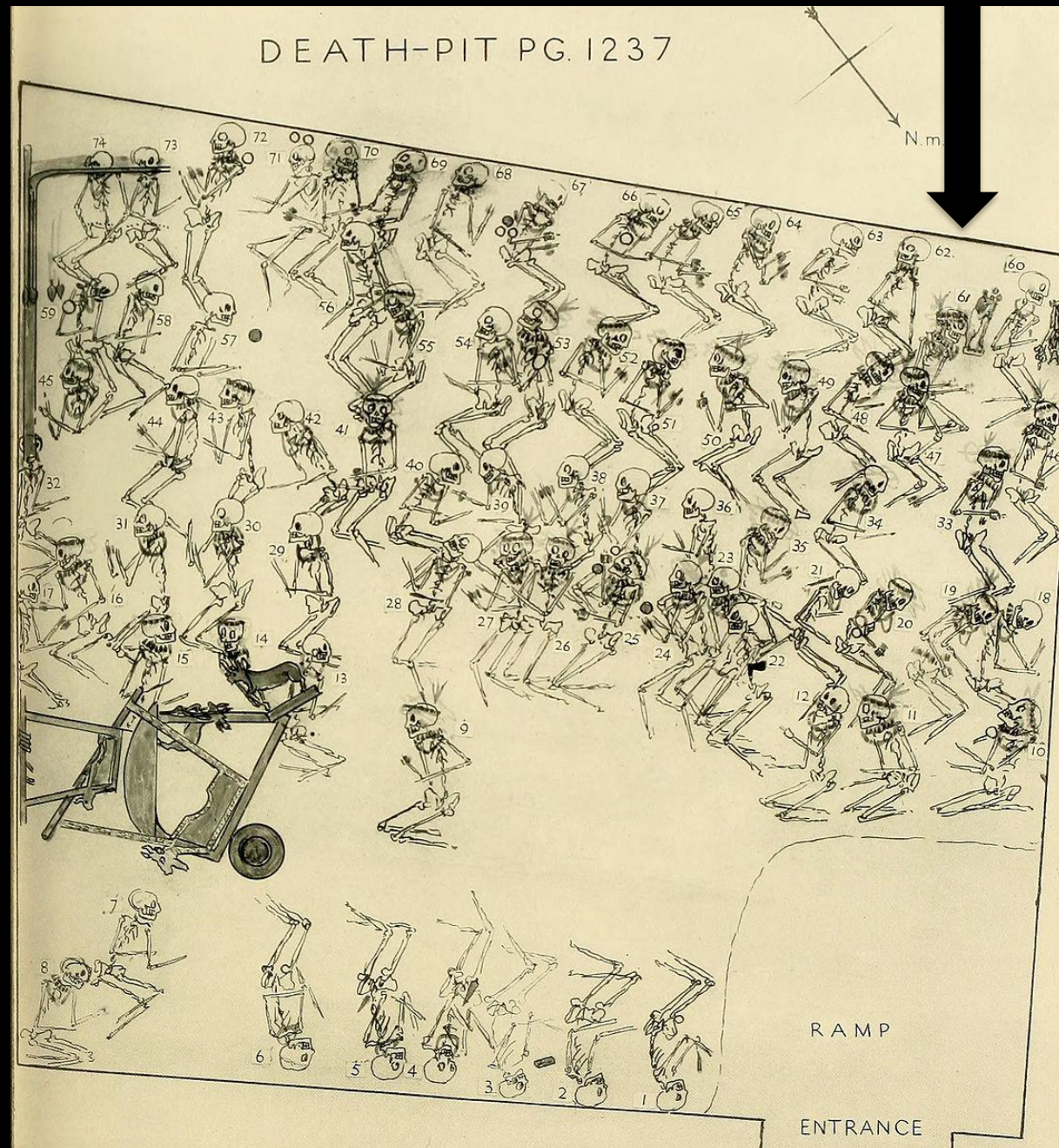
*Map of bodies of 68 women and 6 men with objects found in "The Great Death Pit" at the Royal Tombs of Ur*  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)  
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In the map of "The Great Death Pit" seen here, 6 men with weapons seem to guard the entrance to the burial site. 68 women, many with banquet cups and headdresses of gold, silver, and lapis, are interred together. Body 61 was found in a more elaborate headdress, suggesting that she is the central figure.

*Map of bodies of 68 women and 6 men with objects found in "The Great Death Pit" at the Royal Tombs of Ur*  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)  
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Queen Puabi was not entombed alone. Ten richly adorned women accompanied her in the grave.



*Queen Puabi's burial jewelry, , ca. 2600 BCE.*  
Author: [Penn Museum](#), Source: Wikimedia  
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*Burial jewelry from Royal Tombs of Ur*  
Author: [JMiall](#) , Source: Wikimedia Commons,  
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A lyre featuring a gold and lapis lazuli bull's head was found in Queen Puabi's tomb over the body of the woman who seemingly played it during the funeral ceremony.

Archeologist Leonard Woolley recounted that she was found buried with her fingers placed as if against the strings.

*Bull's Head Lyre*

Found in the grave of Queen Puabi,  
Royal Tombs of Ur, c. 2600 BCE

Author: Mary Harrsch

Source: Flickr

License: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



The crushed gold head of the bull with its carved lapis lazuli beard, hair, and eyes was found and restored.

Although the wood of the lyre had disintegrated, Leonard Woolley was able to pour plaster into the depression left by the instrument to allow for the replacement to be made that fits with the original shell and red limestone mosaic adornment.

*Bull's Head Lyre*

Found in the grave of Queen Puabi, Royal Tombs of Ur  
c. 2600 BCE

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*Bull's Head Lyre*

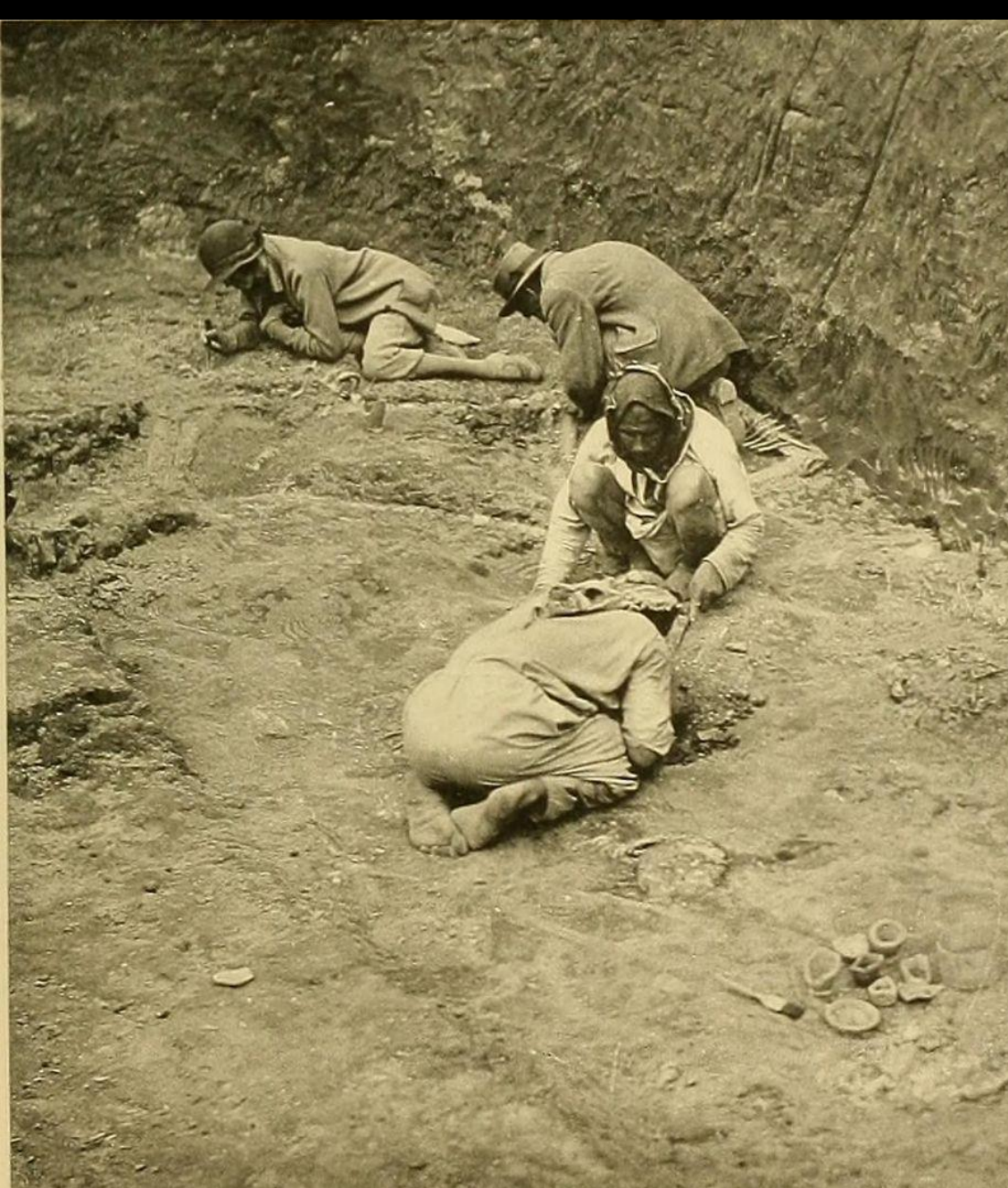
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Here Leonard Woolley carries a plaster mold of one of the lyres made during the excavations of the Royal Tombs of Ur



*Leonard Woolley with plaster mold of a lyre from Royal Tombs of Ur*  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain





Here, Leonard and Katharine Woolley work alongside two assistants in the excavations of the Royal Tombs of Ur, which continued from 1922 to 1934.

*Leonard and Katharine Woolley with two assistants during excavations of the Royal Tombs of Ur. Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain*





*Bull's Head Lyre*

Found in the grave of Queen Puabi,  
Royal Tombs of Ur, c. 2600 BCE

Author: Mary Harrsch

Source: Flickr

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According to Herodotus, the ancient Greek traveler known as the “father of history”, the Egyptians were the most religious people he had ever encountered.

Author: [Ahmed Yousry Mahfouz](#)

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Ancient Egyptians believed that the movements of heavenly bodies, the workings of the gods, and human activities were all part of a harmonious grand design.

The human soul, called the *ka*, would have eternal life.

Author: [Ahmed Yousry Mahfouz](#)

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The essential part of each human  
the spirit, the life force, the *ka*  
lives after the death of the body, engaging  
for all eternity in the activities beloved  
during life.

The ka needs a body to inhabit after death,  
either the mummified body or  
a sculpted likeness.

Author: [Ahmed Yousry Mahfouz](#)

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*The Giza Necropolis*

Author: [KennyOMG](#)

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As a result of their belief in the eternal life of the soul, the ancient Egyptians developed elaborate burial practices, including pyramid tombs.

The *Great Pyramids of Giza*, the three largest of the pyramids, sit within a vast necropolis of tombs of ancient Egyptian rulers.



*The Great Pyramids of Giza*

Author: [Kallerna](#)

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*Great Pyramids of Giza* were built by three successive Fourth-Dynasty kings:  
Khufu, Khafre, and Menkaure

The pyramids have square bases with triangular sides, which may represent  
rays of sun.

Later pyramid tomb inscriptions reference kings climbing up rays to join the  
sun god, Ra.





*The Great Pyramids of Giza*

Author: [Kallerna](#)

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A huge labor force was needed to create the pyramids.

Each stone weighs about 2.5 tons and was transported by muscle power. The builders may have used a combination of rolling logs and mud to help transport the locally quarried stone.



*Khafre's Complex*, c. 2520-2494, Author: [MusikAnimal](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Designers of the pyramids were capable of sophisticated mathematical calculations. The foundations needed to be perfectly level and the angles of the sides needed to remain constant so the stone structure would meet at the uppermost central point.





Great Pyramid of Giza, Author: [Mgiganteus1](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)





*The Great Sphinx at Khafre's Complex, c. 2520-2494, Author: [Hajor](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 1.0](#)*





*The Great Sphinx at Khafre's Complex, c. 2520-2494, Author: [Hajor](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 1.0](#)*

The Sphinx is a monumental hybrid portrait statue of Khafre's head with lion's body, which stands guard over Khafre's tomb.





*The Great Sphinx*, c. 2520-2494, Author: [Hedwig Storch](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons: License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

The Great Sphinx embodies human intelligence merged with animal strength.





*The Great Sphinx*, c. 2520-2494, Author: [Diego Delso](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons: License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)





The tomb of king Tutankhamun was discovered intact in 1922.

Tutankhamun was in poor health with a clubfoot, cleft palate, and bone disease.

He died at age 19, likely from malaria and an infected leg wound. Other theories suggest he died in a chariot accident, after a harsh blow to the head, or by being attacked by a hippopotamus.

He was a minor king by Egyptian standards.

Author: [Ahmed Yousry Mahfouz](#)

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

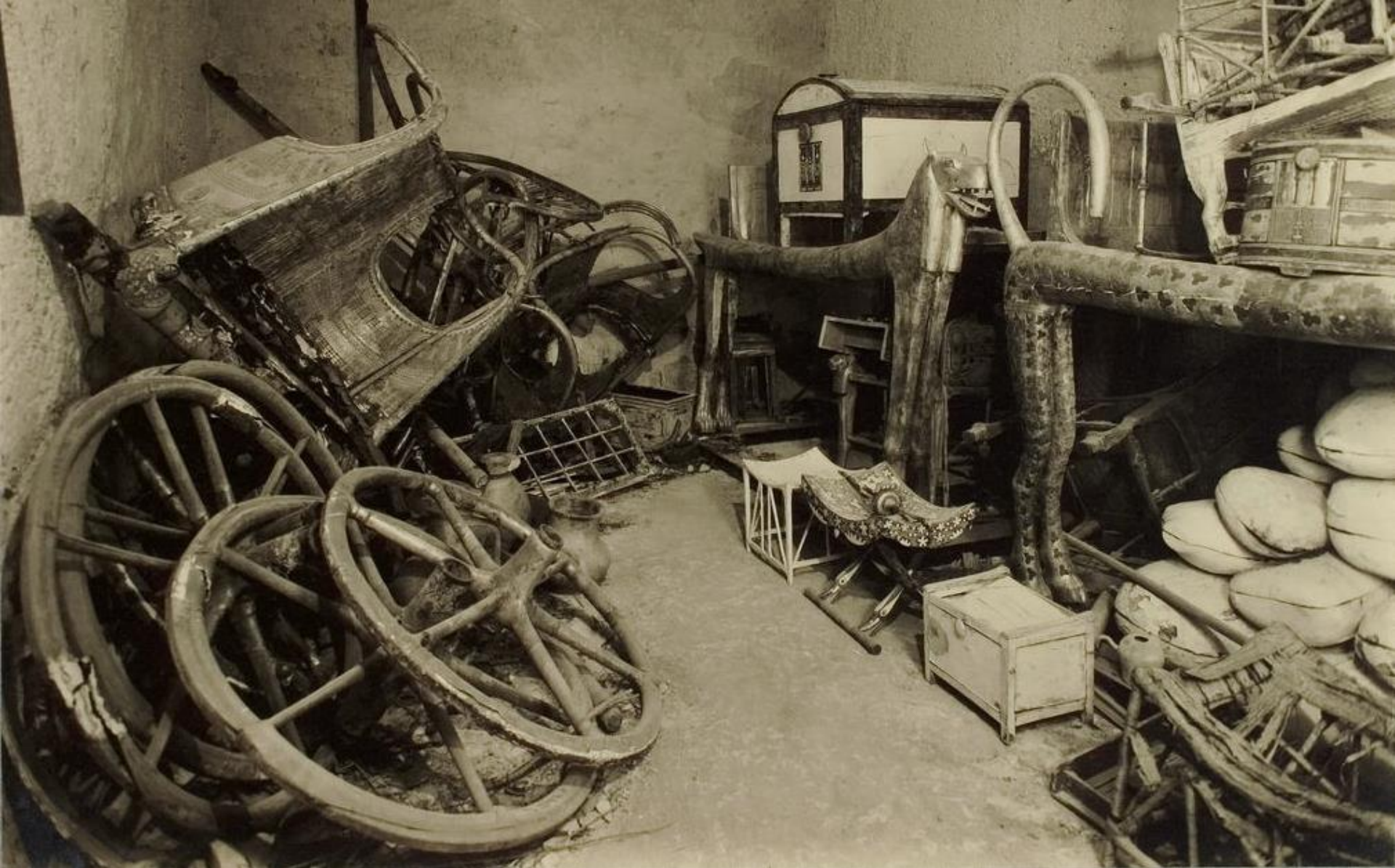
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*Unbroken Seal on the Third Shrine of Tutankhamun's tomb, Author: [Harry Burton](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain*

Many of the Egyptian tombs were looted in ancient times, so finding the undisturbed tomb of Tutankhamun was a major discovery.



*Tutankhamun's Tomb*, Author: [Harry Burton](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain

The multi-roomed tomb was full of objects meant to make the eternal life of the *ka* of the young king more comfortable.





*Tutankhamun's Tomb*, Author: [Harry Burton](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain

Several *ka* statues were present inside the tomb, placed there to give the spirit of Tutankhamun a place to rest.



*Howard Carter in Tutankhamun's Tomb, Author: [Harry Burton](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain*

Howard Carter exhumed the body of King Tutankhamun in 1922.





Inside the stone sarcophagus of King Tutankhamun, Howard Carter found three nested coffins.

The outer two were wood covered with gold and semiprecious stones, and the innermost was solid gold with semiprecious stone decoration.

*Innermost coffin of Tutankhamun*

Gold with inlay of enamel and semiprecious stones, c. 1323 B.C.E.

Author: Steven Zucker

Source: Smarthistory

License: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



The innermost gold coffin was covered in a dried and blackened liquid from the hands down to the ankles, which was the remnants of the anointing liquid poured on it during the burial ceremony.

*Howard Carter Exhuming Tutankhamun's Tomb*

Author: New York Times Photo Archive

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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*Innermost coffin of Tutankhamun, Gold with inlay of enamel and semiprecious stones, c. 1323 B.C.E.*  
Author: [Steven Zucker](#), Source: Smarthistory, License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

The innermost gold coffin weighs nearly 243 pounds.



Inside the innermost nested coffin, a funerary mask covered the face and shoulders of the mummy of Tutankhamun.

Egyptian kings were believed to join the gods after death, so the coffins and funerary masks of kings depict god-like figures.

Gold was associated with life-giving rays of sun and with eternity.

The flesh of the gods was believed to be gold that would never decay.

*Funerary Mask of Tutankhamun*

c. 1323 B.C.E

Gold with enamel and semiprecious stone

Author: [Ahmed Yousry Mahfouz](#)

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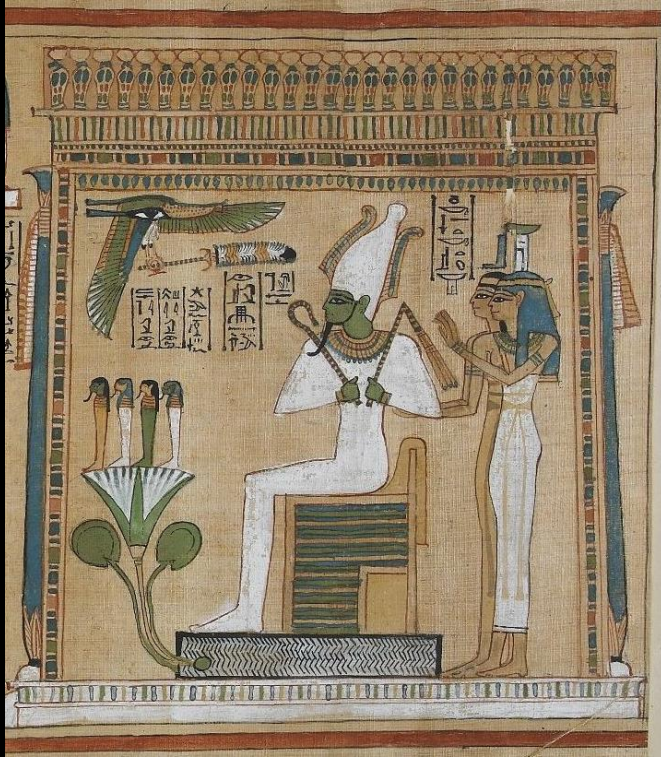


*Tarek Heikal*  
Funerary Mask of Tutankhamun, c. 1323 B.C.E  
Author: [Tarek Heikal](#) Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

The funerary mask shows Tutankhamun in his royal striped *nemes* headdress, decorated with the heads of a cobra and a vulture, and a false beard.

On the back of his collar, a spell from the Book of the Dead is carved. The spell is meant to help Tutankhamun navigate the transition into the afterlife.





*Osiris in The Book of the Dead of Hunefer, ca. 1275. Author: [British Museum](#), Cropped from original, Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain*



*False Beard from a large statue, circa 1070 –664 B.C. Source: [MET Museum](#) License: [CC0 1.0](#)*



*Tutankhamun Funerary Mask with False Beard Source: [Pexels](#), License: [CC0 1.0](#)*

False beards were worn as sign of rank. Archeologists suggest that Egyptian rulers shaved their faces and wore the false beard for ceremonial and religious reasons. Associated with the gods, particularly the god of the underworld, Osiris, these were precious objects that were held on with gold ribbon.



# THE BOOKS OF THE DEAD



*The Book of the Dead of Hunefer*, ancient Egyptian, ca. 1275 BC, Ink and paint on papyrus  
Author: [British Museum](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain

Funerary practices in Ancient Egypt revolved around Osiris. The dead were thought to undergo a last judgment wherein their hearts were weighed on a scale against an ostrich feather.

"Books of the Dead" were buried with the deceased. They contained texts or spells to help the dead pass the tests in the afterlife. They were not always written on papyrus; sometimes they were painted on burial shrouds, the interior of coffins, or interior tomb walls.



# THE BOOKS OF THE DEAD



*Papyrus*, Source: [Pixabay](#), License: [CC0 1.0](#)

*Papyrus plant*. Author: [Dr. Mary Gillham Archive Project](#), Source: [Flickr](#): License: [CC BY 2.0](#)

The *Book of the Dead of Hunefer* was written upon papyrus, a paper-like substance made from the papyrus plant. The papyrus plant grows abundantly along the Nile River in Egypt and the earliest known instances of the plant being used to make scrolls come from ancient Egypt.



# JUDGEMENT OF HUNEFER BEFORE OSIRIS



*The Book of the Dead of Hunefer, ancient Egyptian, ca. 1275 BC, Ink and paint on papyrus  
Author: [British Museum](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain*

This Book of the Dead belongs to Hunefer, who was a royal scribe. Royal scribes were important individuals and part of the priestly class. Perhaps Hunefer penned his own Book of the Dead as a map for navigating the trials of the afterlife.



# JUDGEMENT OF HUNEFER BEFORE OSIRIS



*The Book of the Dead of Hunefer, ancient Egyptian, ca. 1275 BC, Ink and paint on papyrus  
Author: [British Museum](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain*

This illustration from Hunefer's Book of the Dead shows the three stages in Hunefer's induction to the afterlife. We see Hunefer three times, in white, passing through the trials of the afterlife. Only a person free from wrongdoing could pass through and enjoy an afterlife.



# JUDGEMENT OF HUNEFER BEFORE OSIRIS



*The Book of the Dead of Hunefer*, ancient Egyptian, ca. 1275 BC, Ink and paint on papyrus  
Author: [British Museum](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain

Anubis, the jackal-headed god of embalming and cemeteries, leads Hunefer to scales. Anubis carries an *ankh*, symbol of eternal life, in his left hand. We then see Anubis again as he weighs Hunefer's heart against the feather of Truth.



# JUDGEMENT OF HUNEFER BEFORE OSIRIS



*The Book of the Dead of Hunefer, ancient Egyptian, ca. 1275 BC, Ink and paint on papyrus  
Author: [British Museum](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain*

The ibis-headed god Thoth prepares to record the result of the weighing.



# JUDGEMENT OF HUNEFER BEFORE OSIRIS



*The Book of the Dead of Hunefer, ancient Egyptian, ca. 1275 BC, Ink and paint on papyrus*  
Author: [British Museum](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain

Ammit, the “Eater of the Dead”, part crocodile, part lion, and part hippopotamus, waits to devour the heart if it is found to be heavier than the feather.



# JUDGEMENT OF HUNEFER BEFORE OSIRIS



*The Book of the Dead of Hunefer*, ancient Egyptian, ca. 1275 BC, Ink and paint on papyrus  
Author: [British Museum](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain

Hunefer passes the test, as his heart is lighter than the feather. He proceeds and Horus presents Hunefer to Osiris. The son of Osiris, Horus, depicted with a falcon head, holds an *ankh* (eternal life) in his left hand.



# JUDGEMENT OF HUNEFER BEFORE OSIRIS



*The Book of the Dead of Hunefer*, ancient Egyptian, ca. 1275 BC, Ink and paint on papyrus  
Author: [British Museum](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain

Osiris, enthroned, floats on a lake of natron, the salt used to preserve the dead. Goddesses support his left arm.

The four sons of Horus, those entrusted with the deceased's vital organs, stand on a lotus blossom (a symbol of eternal life) rising out of the natron lake.



On this funerary krater, we see a representation of the ancient Greek experience of death and mourning.

Greek kraters are large vases that were often used for wine or other liquid. However, this krater was used as a grave marker.

Hirschfeld Workshop. *Terracotta Funerary Krater*  
Ancient Greek, ca. 750–735 B.C.

Author: [MET Museum](#)  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)  
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The bottom of this funerary krater is open.  
Mourners perhaps mixed ceremonial libations and poured them into the krater to allow them to slowly seep down to the body of the buried deceased.



Hirschfeld Workshop. *Terracotta Funerary Krater*  
Ancient Greek, ca. 750–735 B.C.

Author: [MET Museum](#)  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)  
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The symmetry and precision of the terracotta form are a result of the krater being made using a potter's wheel.



*Potter's Wheel*

Source: PxHere

Licence: [CC0 1.0](#)

Hirschfeld Workshop  
*Terracotta Funerary Krater*  
Ancient Greek, ca. 750–735 B.C.  
Author: [MET Museum](#)  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)  
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The decoration on the krater is in the Greek Geometric style and illustrates events surrounding death.

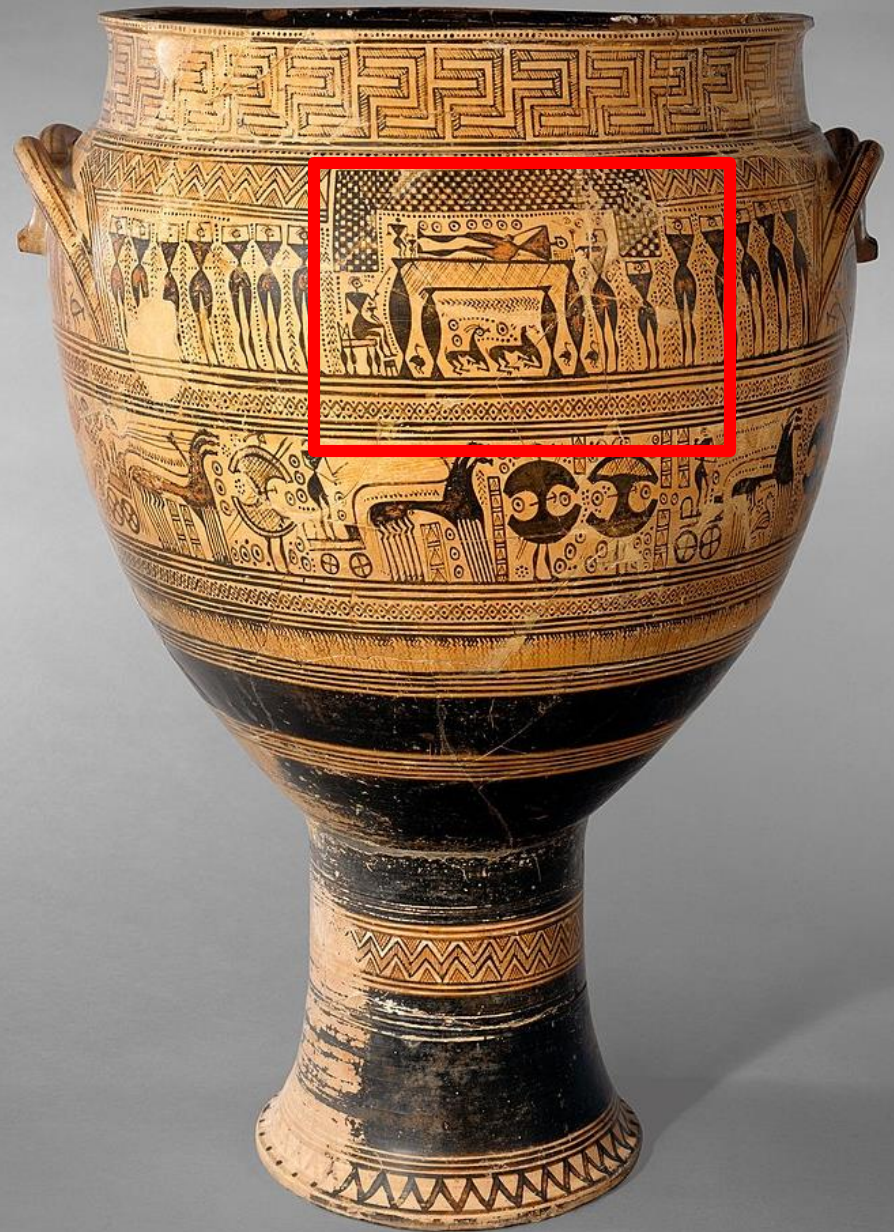


Hirschfeld Workshop. *Terracotta Funerary Krater*  
Ancient Greek, ca. 750–735 B.C.

Author: [MET Museum](#)  
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On the upper register, the body of deceased is depicted on a funerary platform. The checked burial shroud that would have been used to wrap the body floats above the body.



Hirschfeld Workshop. *Terracotta Funerary Krater*  
Ancient Greek, ca. 750–735 B.C.

Author: [MET Museum](#)  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)  
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Standing figures hold hands over their heads. This is gesture of mourning, representing tearing out hair in grief.



Hirschfeld Workshop. *Terracotta Funerary Krater*  
Ancient Greek, ca. 750–735 B.C.

Author: [MET Museum](#)  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)  
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Notice the way that the arms form rectangles and the upper bodies are triangles? This is characteristic of the Greek Geometric Period.



Hirschfeld Workshop. *Terracotta Funerary Krater*  
Ancient Greek, ca. 750–735 B.C.

Author: [MET Museum](#)  
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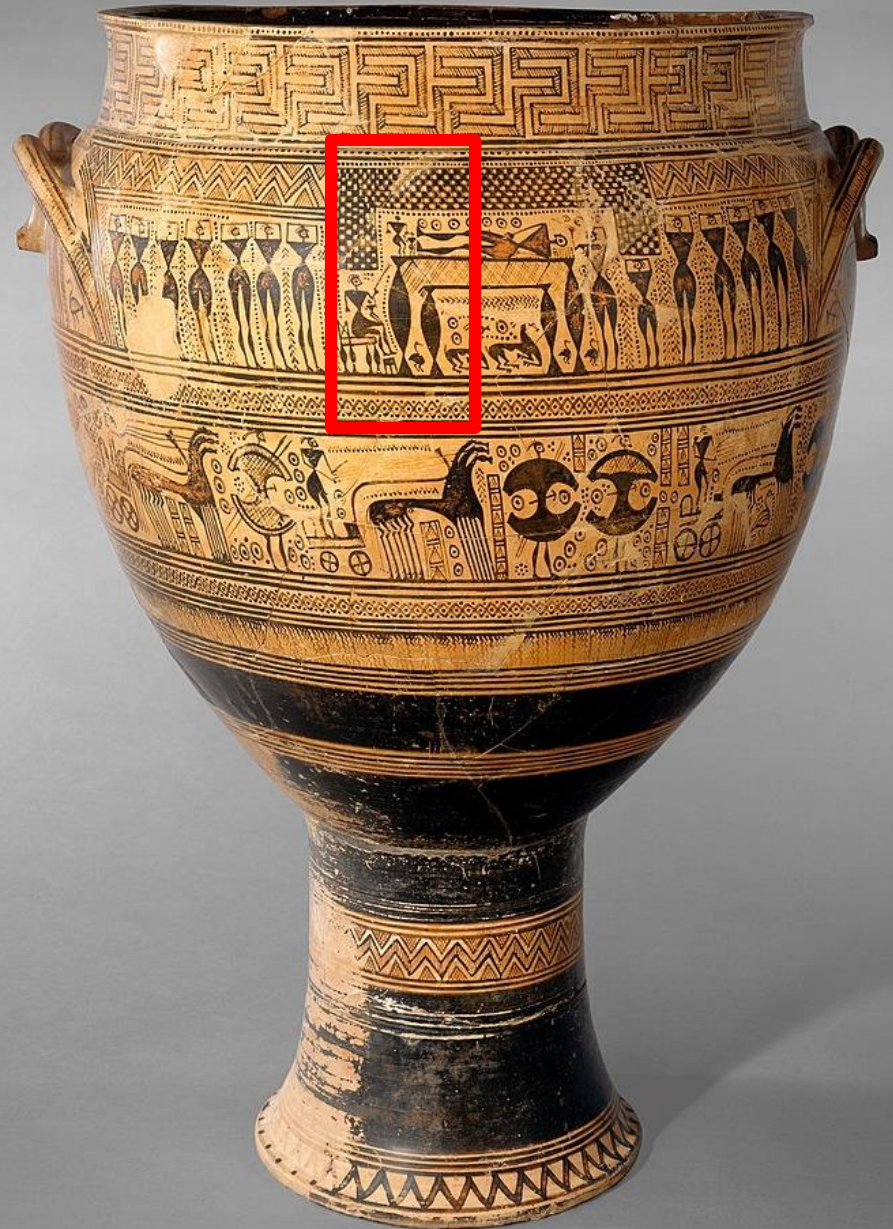


Detail of decoration on *Terracotta Funerary Krater*; Author: [Steven Zucker](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

The body of the dead is depicted on the funerary platform, with checked shroud floating above. The body and the shroud have both been tilted upward to make them more definable. Mourners surround the body.



Mourners surround the figure, likely representations of the family of the deceased.



Hirschfeld Workshop. *Terracotta Funerary Krater*  
Ancient Greek, ca. 750–735 B.C.

Author: [MET Museum](#)  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)  
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Geese and deer under funerary platform  
represent sacrificial animals.



Hirschfeld Workshop. *Terracotta Funerary Krater*  
Ancient Greek, ca. 750–735 B.C.

Author: [MET Museum](#)  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)  
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In the lower register, warriors with chariots  
march in funeral procession.

Battle armor melds with their bodies,  
forming dynamic shapes.

The chariot has three overlapping horses,  
giving sense of three-dimensionality.



Hirschfeld Workshop. *Terracotta Funerary Krater*  
Ancient Greek, ca. 750–735 B.C.

Author: [MET Museum](#)  
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The decorations on the terracotta funerary krater reflect Greek beliefs about death. Greeks emphasized **humanism**, or the idea that the world of the living matters most.



Hirschfeld Workshop. *Terracotta Funerary Krater*  
Ancient Greek, ca. 750–735 B.C.

Author: [MET Museum](#)  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)  
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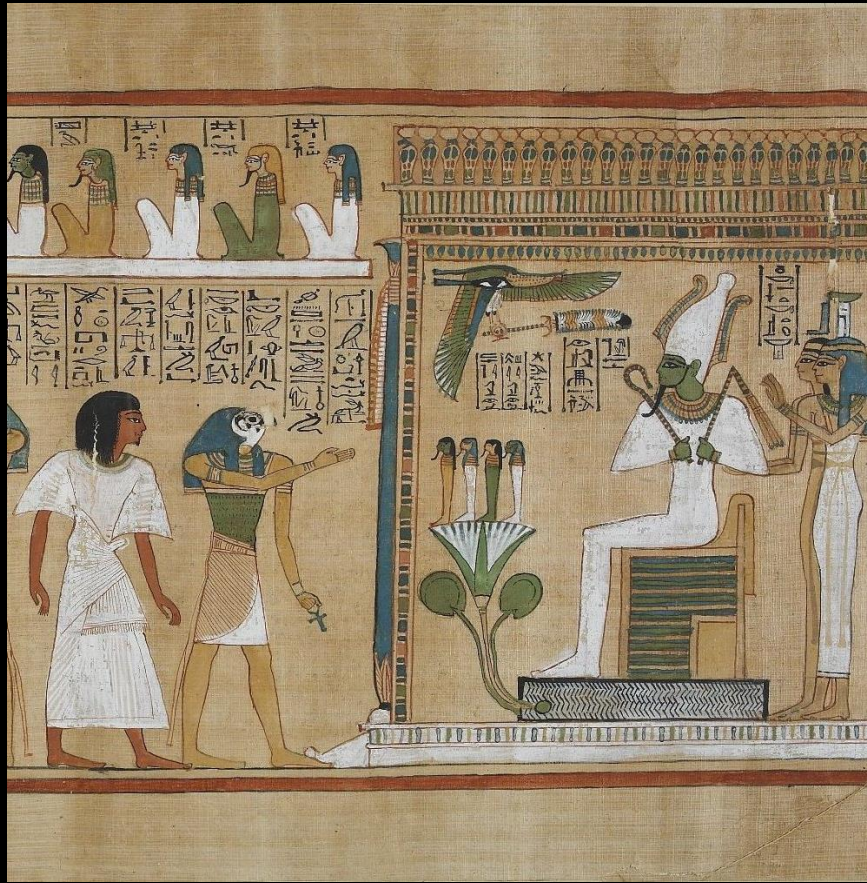
The decoration on the krater emphasizes the experience of the mourners. There is no reference to the afterlife. Death is final.



Hirschfeld Workshop. *Terracotta Funerary Krater*  
Ancient Greek, ca. 750–735 B.C.

Author: [MET Museum](#)  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)  
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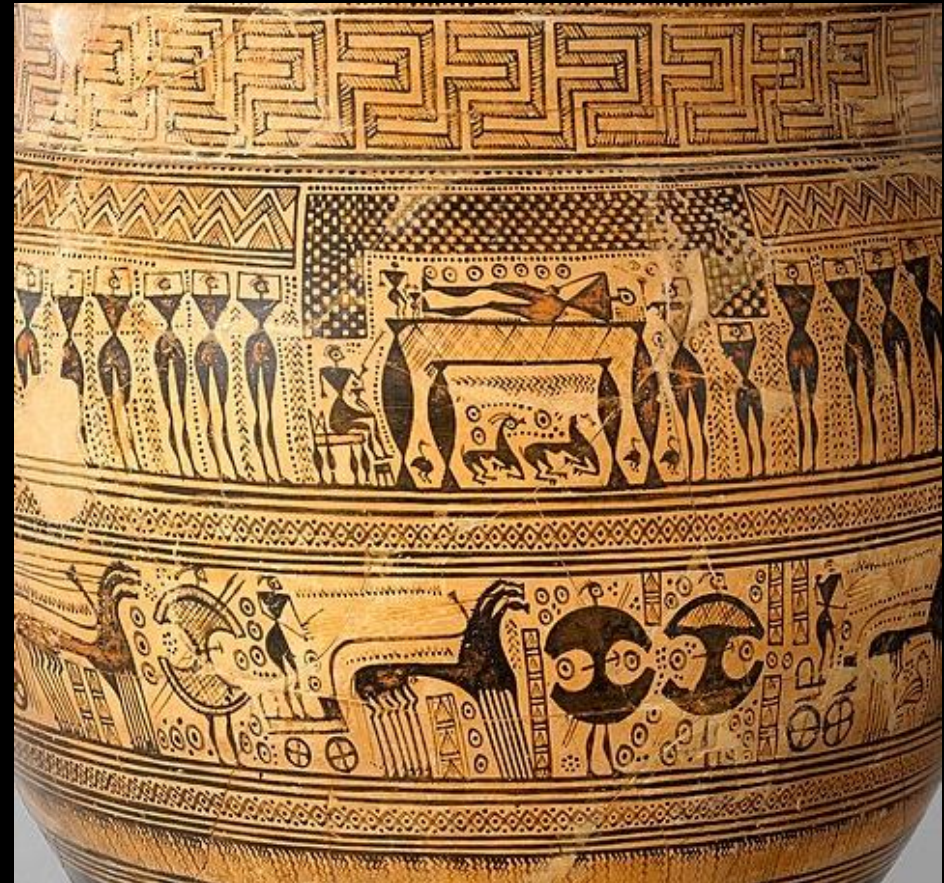




*Judgement of Hunefer Before Osiris*

Ancient Egypt, ca. 1275 BC

Cropped from original; Author: [British Museum](#),  
Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain



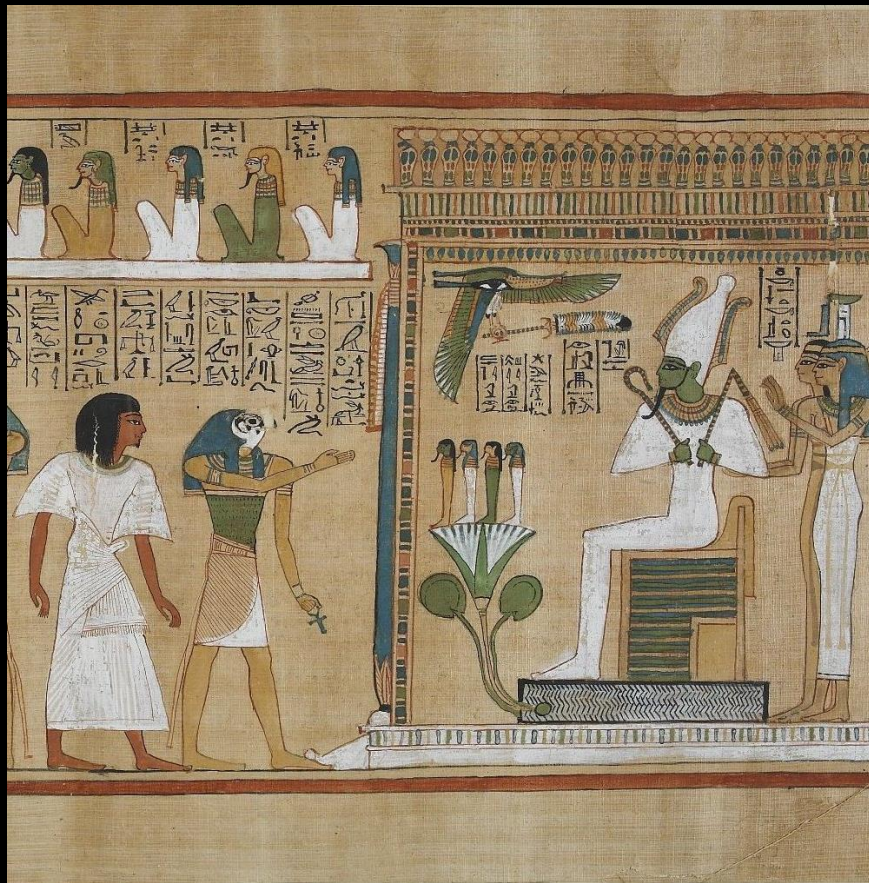
*Terracotta Funerary Krater*

Ancient Greece, ca. 750–735 B.C.

Cropped from original; Author: [MET Museum](#), Source: Wikimedia  
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Both the *Book of the Dead of Hunefer* and the *Greek Funerary Vessel* show ancient images depicting the experiences of the deceased after death, but they demonstrate remarkably different views on death.



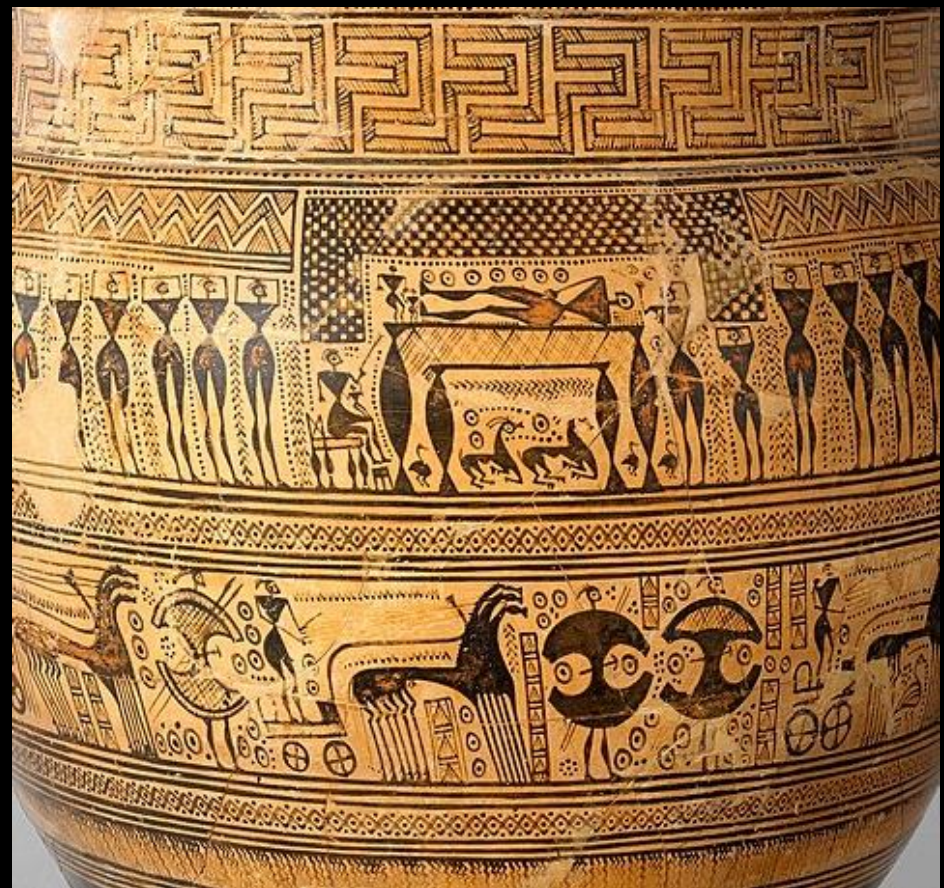


*Judgement of Hunefer Before Osiris*

Ancient Egypt, ca. 1275 BC

Cropped from original; Author: [British Museum](#),  
Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain

In the Ancient Egyptian image, the deceased Hunefer is seen alive entering the afterlife. Surrounding the dead Hunefer are gods and figures in the afterlife showing the new life of the deceased.



*Terracotta Funerary Krater*

Ancient Greece, ca. 750–735 B.C.

Cropped from original; Author: [MET Museum](#), Source: Wikimedia  
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In the ancient Greek image, the deceased is seen dead on a funerary platform. Figures surrounding the dead are the human mourners left on earth. The focus of the image is on the life of those left behind.







## Reading List: 04\_Death and Mourning in the Prehistoric and Ancient Worlds

Reference book with information about for Cernavoda Sculptures:

<http://bit.ly/prehistoricartineurope>

Short article about burial in Neolithic settlement of Çatalhöyük:

<https://www.livescience.com/14824-communal-human-burials-ancient-settlement.html>

Brief article about burials at Varna Necropolis:

<https://visit.varna.bg/en/sights/preview/293.html>

Intro to cuneiform; includes information about the *Epic of Gilgamesh*:

<https://smarthistory.org/cuneiform/>

A translation of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*:

<http://www.aina.org/books/eog/eog.pdf>

Information about the Royal Tombs of Ur:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/ancient-mediterranean-ap/ancient-near-east-a/a/standard-of-ur-and-other-objects-from-the-royal-graves>

Information about “The Great Death Pit” from the Royal Tombs of Ur; map PG1237:

[https://www.penn.museum/sites/irag/?page\\_id=208](https://www.penn.museum/sites/irag/?page_id=208)

The Great Pyramids of Giza article:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/ancient-mediterranean-ap/ancient-egypt-ap/a/old-kingdom-the-great-pyramids-of-giza>

Pyramid of Khafre and the Great Sphinx:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/ancient-mediterranean-ap/ancient-egypt-ap/a/old-kingdom-pyramid-of-khafre-and-the-great-sphinx>

Article about Tutankhamun’s Tomb (innermost coffin and death mask):

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/ancient-mediterranean-ap/ancient-egypt-ap/a/tutankhamuns-tomb>

Source of weight of inner coffin of Tutankhamun:

<https://books.google.com/books?id=g06YdNu4owMC&pg=PT20&lpg=PT20&dq=king+tutankhamun+coffin+243+pounds&source=bl&ots=4hhLdbXK4Y&sig=ACfU3U1WHatoGIZHQu4O24-4m1-C4PSbmw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjp8f76x-7iAhUvzlkKHZwyCIUQ6AEwF3oECAGQAQ#v=onepage&q=king%20tutankhamun%20coffin%20243%20pounds&f=false>



Egyptian False Beard:

<http://mentalfloss.com/article/50076/why-did-egyptian-pharaohs-wear-false-beards>

British Museum Page about the Book of the Dead of Hunefer:

[https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=114851&partId=1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=114851&partId=1)

Article about the Book of the Dead of Hunefer:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/ancient-mediterranean-ap/ancient-egypt-ap/a/hunefer-book-of-the-dead>

Video Lecture on the Last Judgement of Hunefer, from the Book of the Dead of Hunefer:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/ancient-mediterranean-ap/ancient-egypt-ap/v/judgement-in-the-presence-of-osiris-hunefer-s-book-of-the-dead>

Video Lecture on Greek Terracotta Krater:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ancient-art-civilizations/greek-art/greek-pottery/v/terracotta-krater>

Metropolitan Museum Information on Greek Terracotta Krater:

<https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/14.130.14/>



### **Sketchbook Assignment: 04\_Death and Mourning in the Prehistoric and Ancient World**

Write two paragraphs about which work of art more closely resembles your (or your culture's) understanding and experience of death: the Ancient Greek *Terracotta Funerary Krater* or the Ancient Egyptian *Book of the Dead of Hunefer*. Why?